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CONTACT: Sten Iversen
Montana Department of Commerce
Montana Film Office
406-841-2879, 406-431-5920

Marissa Kozel
Montana Department of Commerce
406-841-2772

HBO Films' Selects Montana as Setting for Upcoming Film Starring Kevin Bacon

Montana's Improved Film Incentives Create New Opportunities

(HELENA) — Today Governor Brian Schweitzer announced that HBO Films' has selected Montana as the filming location for its upcoming film **TAKING CHANCE**, starring Kevin Bacon.

Based on the first-person account of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl (USMC), the film chronicles his poignant journey as the volunteer military escort officer who is assigned to accompany the body of 19-year-old Lance Corporal Chance Phelps (USMC), who was killed in action in Iraq, across America back to his hometown of Dubois, Wyoming in spring 2004.

"I am proud HBO Films' has selected Montana to be the backdrop for this compelling story about a fallen hero's final journey home from Iraq," Governor Brian Schweitzer said. "This is an American tale that speaks deeply to many Montana families and it is an honor to participate."

"The Montana Department of Commerce and Montana Film Office are thrilled to work with HBO Films' on this important endeavor," Commerce Director Anthony Preite said. "Improvements to the already successful Big Sky on the Big Screen Act are creating more opportunities for the film industry here in Montana."

TAKING CHANCE will start production in Bozeman and Ennis this summer and debut on HBO in 2008.

L. Cpl. Chance Phelps was killed April 9, 2004, by hostile fire in Al Anbar Province, Iraq and was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with Combat Distinguishing Device. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and had been deployed to Iraq just one month prior to his death. More than 1,000 people attended his funeral in Dubois (population 960).

Bacon will portray Lt. Col. Strobl, a Desert Storm veteran who recently retired after serving 24 years in the U.S. Marine Corps. Strobl developed the original screenplay with the strong support of Phelps' parents, John Phelps and Gretchen Mack. Two-time Oscar®-nominated producer Ross Katz ("Lost in Translation") will be making his directorial debut. TAKING CHANCE is written by Lt. Col. Michael Strobl and Ross Katz, based on the short story by Strobl; executive producers are Brad Krevoy ("A Love Song for Bobby Long"), Cathy Wischner-Sola and Ross Katz; producer is Lori Keith Douglas ("The Notorious Bettie Page"). HBO Films vice president Jenni Sherwood is the executive in charge of the production.

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Strobl, USMC (ret.) (writer) enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1983 and served in all three active duty Marine divisions as a field artilleryman. He has deployed to the Western Pacific and Persian Gulf region with the 13th and 15th Marine Expeditionary Units, and he participated in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm as part of the 1st Marine Division. Strobl's last assignment was at Headquarters, United States Marine Corps; Manpower and Reserve Affairs in Quantico, Va. He wrote the short story "Taking Chance" while serving with the Marine Corps Combat Development Command in Quantico, Va. in April 2004. He retired from the Marine Corps in 2007.

Kevin Bacon (Lt. Col. Strobl) made his film debut as Chip in "National Lampoon's Animal House," which led to roles in "Diner" and "Footloose," the latter of which propelled him to stardom. His film credits also include "Murder in the First" (voted Best Actor by The Broadcast Critics Association), "Apollo 13," "Mystic River" and "The Woodsman" (which earned him an IFP Spirit Award). Bacon's directing credits include "Loverboy," starring Kyra Sedgwick. He will next be seen in the feature films "Death Sentence" and "Rails & Ties."

This spring the Montana State Legislature passed a measure to improve the already successful Big Sky on the Big Screen Act, spearheaded by Governor Brian Schweitzer. The new tax incentive package provides film companies larger tax incentives on production expenditures incurred while on location in Montana, and encourages large scale productions by eliminating a cap on the credits.

Production companies are now given a 14 percent incentive rebate on all Montana labor hired for film production and a nine percent rebate on all production-related Montana expenditures including lodging, equipment rental, fuel, lumber and construction materials.

The 2005 Big Sky on the Big Screen Act provided for a 12 percent tax credit on Montana

labor used during filming, and 8 percent for money spent on goods and services in Montana. It also capped the tax credits on the first million dollars spent.

HBO Films, a division of Home Box Office, produces movies for the network as well as films for theatrical release.

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